



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Laurie Feinberg,
Acting Director

October 9, 2018

REQUEST: Alterations to Rear Elevation and Construct Garage

ADDRESS: 1209 North Calvert Street (Mount Vernon Historic District)

RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

STAFF: Caitlin Audette

APPLICANT: James Ruttley, owner
Kathleen Lechleiter, architect

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mount Vernon Historic District: The Mount Vernon Historic District encompasses roughly 40 blocks surrounding Mount Vernon Place. The contributing buildings within the district include a diversity of styles and building types including mansions, apartments, offices, and religious structures. The period of significance for the Mount Vernon Historic District extends from 1810 to 1945.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: The four-story brownstone rowhouse features an arched door surround on the first floor, and paired windows in a shed dormer at the fourth floor. The rear of the building is composed of a bay that includes the historic chimney and culminates in the three ornamental bishop's cap details. An early first floor addition extends from the northern most opening at and was likely constructed to house a new kitchen in the 1900s.

The current owner, James Ruttley, recently purchased the property from its longtime owner and tenant 1000 Friends of Maryland. Despite prolonged use as an office space the property is remarkably intact on both the interior and exterior.

BACKGROUND

- In 2002, an ATP was issued to replace the 2nd and 3rd floor windows at the rear elevation. There is evidence of a larger project at this time, though no ATP was found.
- In 2012, an ATP was issued to install condenser units on the roof of the rear addition.
- In 2014, an ATP was issued to repoint the rear elevation.

PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The property was recently purchased by the owner who is using it as his private dwelling. The property owner intends to complete a number of alterations to the interior and exterior of the

property and is currently pursuing the city's historic tax credit. Many of the proposed alterations can be approved at the staff level.

Alterations for review by the full commission include the removal of an historic rear addition, the construction of a new one-story garage and elevated platform, the removal of large portions of the rear basement wall and replacement with a glass curtain wall, and the construction of a roof deck in the existing attic space at the uppermost level.

ANALYSIS

Staff applied the following Design Guidelines:

1.18 – Alterations and Additions which states the following, “Design alterations and additions to be compatible and sympathetic to the character of the historic building.” The alteration at the basement that includes the removal of most of the masonry wall does not quite meet this guideline, however as the location of the alteration is so secluded and the design is compatible, if modern, the alteration somewhat meets this guideline.

1.8.10 - Roof Decks states “New roof decks must not be visible from the street-front grade along any primary elevation. Locate roof decks at the rear of a building whenever possible to minimize visibility.” The proposal is unique as the applicant intends to remove an inaccessible portion of the fourth floor attic space and insert a deck beyond the brick wall at that level. The result is a hidden deck that is easily accessed from the front of the fourth floor, but largely invisible. Drainage at the proposed new roof deck will be key to this proposal, as the removal of a historic roof typically causes problems for property owners.

1.9.3 – Carriage Houses, Garages, Sheds, & Outbuildings which states “Design new accessory structures to complement the scale, form, orientation, materials, and details of the primary building and other historic structures on the property.” The proposed new garage will be composed of brick and though one-story high will visually appear as two stories from the alley to more closely resemble the historic carriage houses found throughout the neighborhood. The applicant proposes to use salvaged brick and wood garage doors in a carriage house style. These efforts will allow the new construction to largely meet this guideline.

This guideline also states, “Avoid demolishing historic building, structures, and landscapes when designing new construction projects.” The proposed demolition of the rear addition, dating to the early 1900s, does not meet this guideline. The basement level of the addition is not to code at roughly 7'-0" in height and the property owner intends to return the first floor to its historic appearance with a window flanking the chimney and an exterior door. These unique circumstances, as well as the alterations to the addition and its location on the rear of the building make its demolition acceptable.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Mount Vernon ARC has not yet provided comment regarding the proposed modification.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the alteration as it is on the rear of the building will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. Staff recommends all final details be reviewed by staff.

E. L. M. L.

**Eric Holcomb,
Director**

MAP AND IMAGES

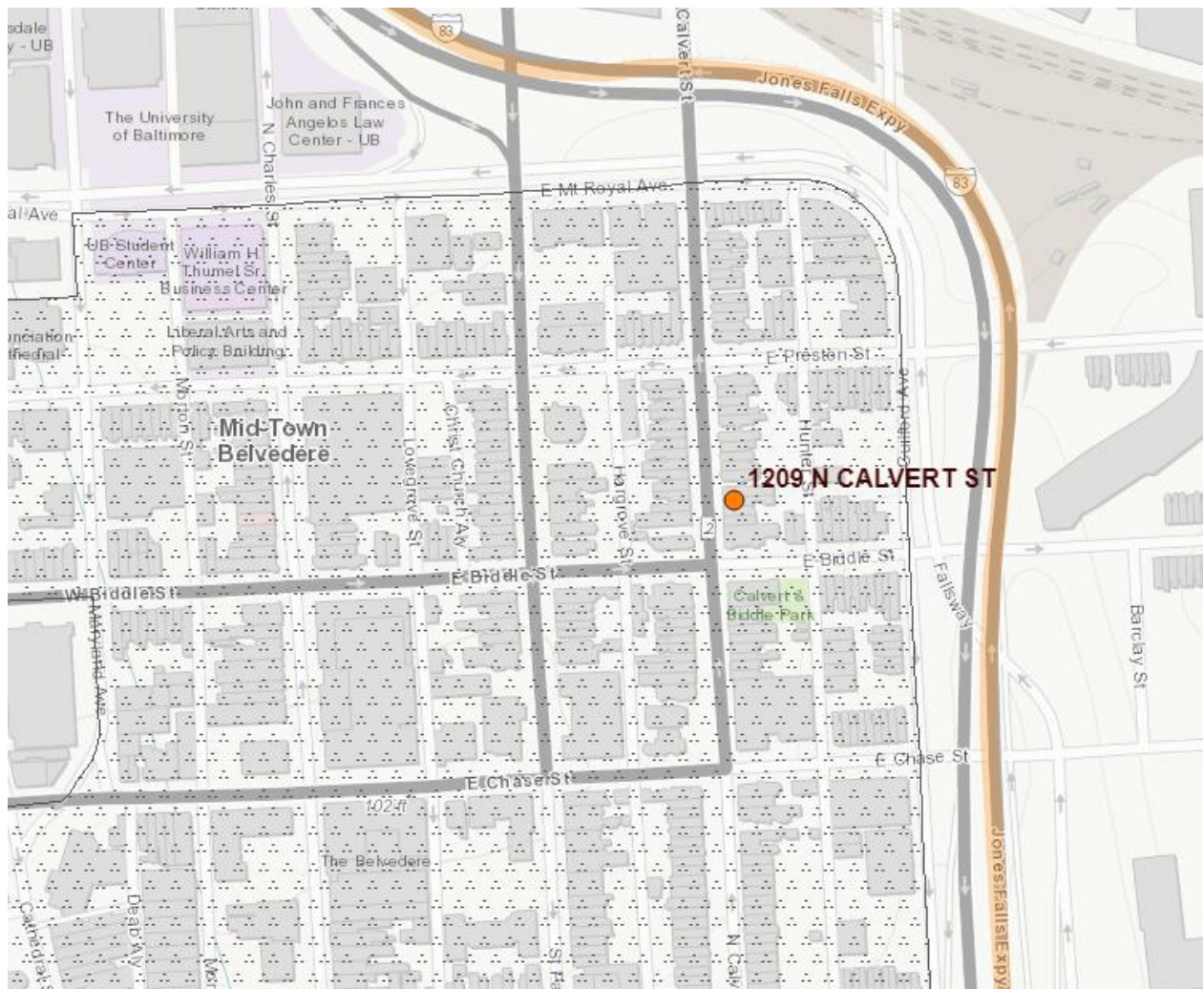


Image 1– Location of 1209 N. Calvert Street within the Mount Vernon Historic District



Image 2– Front Elevation of 1209 N. Calvert Street



Image 3– Rear elevation of 1209 N. Calvert showing rear addition.

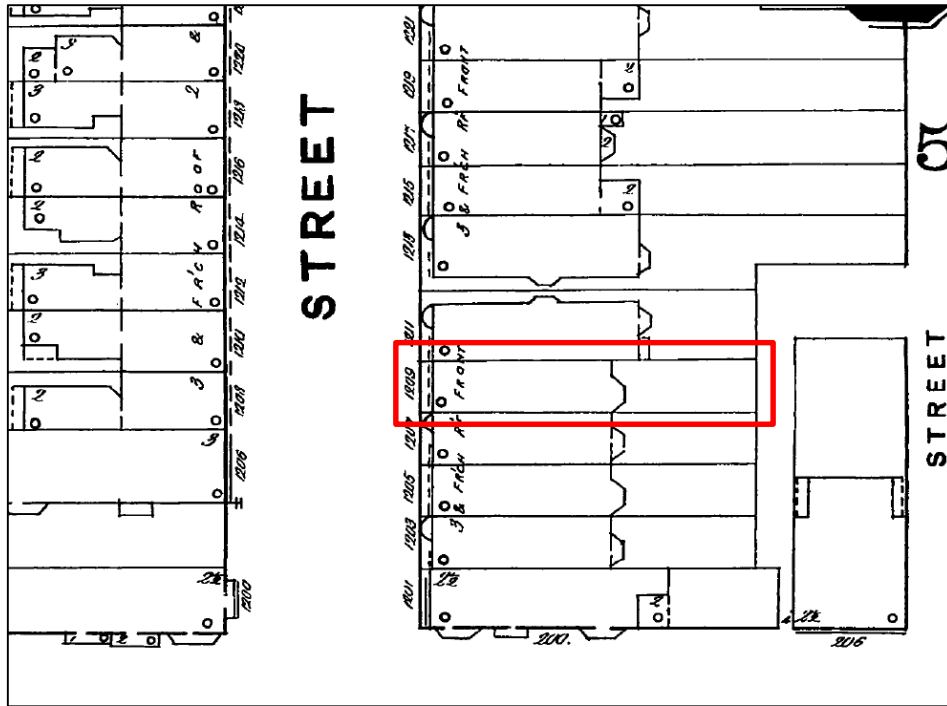


Image 4– 1890 Sanborn Map showing original foot print of historic building at 1209 N. Calvert Street.

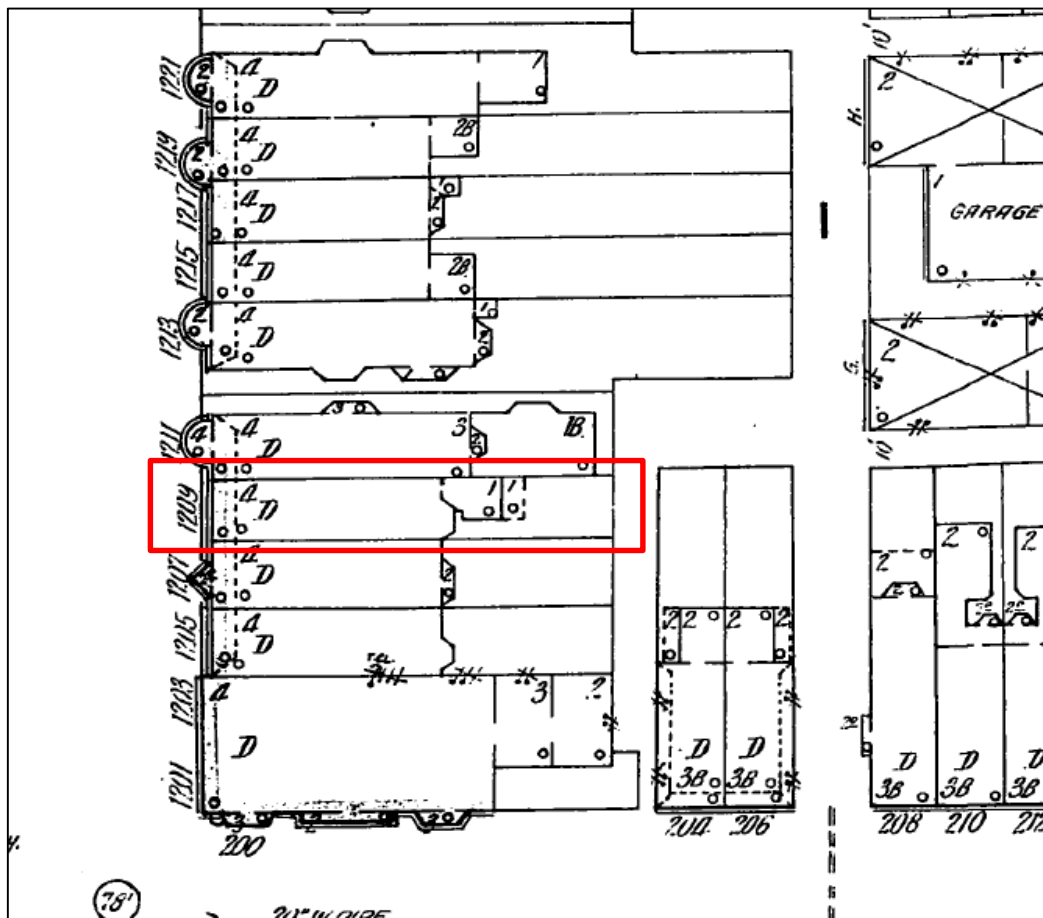


Image 5– 1914 Sanborn Map showing rear addition at 1209 N. Calvert Street.



Image 6– Interior view of basement at rear addition. Height of space is not to code.



Image 7– Interior view of basement at rear wall. Applicant proposes the removal of the two walls flanking the historic fireplace and chimney.



Image 8– Interior view of first floor showing doorway at left leading to addition. The applicant proposes to reveal or reinstall the window to the left of the fireplace and an exterior door.



Image 9– View of roof with line showing the location of the new roof line and start of roof deck.